A

SERMON,

PREACHED BEFORE THE

GUARDIANS

OF THE

ASYLUM FOR HELPLESS ORPHANS,

On Thursday, May 19, 1791.

By GEORGE HENRY GLASSE, M.A.

LATE STUDENT OF CHRIST-CHURCH, OXFORD,

RECTOR OF HANWELL, MIDDLESEX.

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MDCCXCI.

BRITISH MUSEUM

ASYLUM, *May* 26, 1791.

At a Committee of Guardians,

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY,

That the Thanks of this Committee be given to the Reverend GEORGE HENRY GLASSE, for his moſt excellent Diſcourſe, preached before the Guardians of this Charity, in their Chapel, on their anniverſary Meeting, the 19th inſtant.

Signed,

WILLIAM ARNOLD, Chairman.

TO

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE

FREDERICK EARL OF GUILDFORD,

PRESIDENT,

THE VICE PRESIDENTS,

THE TREASURER,

THE ANNUAL COMMITTEE,

AND THE REST OF THE GUARDIANS

OF THE

A S Y L U M,

THIS SERMON

IS WITH ALL RESPECT

DEDICATED,

BY THEIR MOST FAITHFUL

HUMBLE SERVANT,

HANWELL,
May 29, 1791.

GEORGE HENRY GLASSE.

TO

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FREDERICK EARL OF GUILDFORD,

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MATTHEW, Chap. xxv. ver. 34.

"COME, YE BLESSED OF MY FATHER, INHERIT THE "KINGDOM PREPARED FOR YOU FROM THE FOUNDA-"TION OF THE WORLD."

THE words are familiar to your ears: but can they be too frequently repeated? Can the ſoul, without new ſenſations of pleaſure, contemplate its invitation to future glory? They are the welcome of the faithful ſervant to his maſter—the adjudication of the prize of the high calling in Chriſt Jeſus. Ye, who delight in works of mercy, muſt hear them uttered again and again by mortal lips: may they be addreſſed to you by your Saviour and your GOD, when he cometh to judgment!

There is ſomething wonderfully ſtriking in the whole paſſage of ſacred ſcripture, which thus removes the veil from the holy of holies, and imparts to man the counſels of Heaven. Inſtead of plauſible conjecture, obſcure hypotheſis, or the ingenious effuſions of fancy, we have a poſitive prediction from the oracle of truth, concerning an event equally intereſting to all men, from Adam to his lateſt deſcendant—concerning a day, when the rich and the poor ſhall meet together in the preſence of their GOD. He, who will ſummon a world to his tribunal, declares to his apoſtles, and through them to mankind, what will be the form and manner of his coming; what the terms, in which the bleſſed ſhall be called to their reward, the tranſgreſſours diſmiſſed to their puniſhment.

In her contemplations on this magnificent ſubject, the mind is tranſported as it were out of herſelf, and ſoars into regions inacceſſible by man. There ſhe beholds the Meſſiah, inveſted with the glory of his co-eternal Father. She beholds him, deſcending with a ſhout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of GOD. A multitude, whom no man can number, proclaim before him, as with the ſound of mighty thunderings, "Hallelujah—

"for the Lord GOD omnipotent reigneth!" At the brightneſs of his preſence the heavens and earth flee away, and have no place—the elements are diſſolved—the dead are raiſed up—the judgment is ſet—the books are opened—the ſolemn inveſtigation is made—the irrevocable ſentence is pronounced.

It cannot have eſcaped your obſervation, that the crown of unfading glory is awarded, not to ſpeculative, but to practical excellence. True religion, and undefiled before the Father of mercies, is ſeated, not in the underſtanding, but in the heart. There, rooted and grounded in the love of GOD and man, abounding in good works, adorned with chriſtian graces, it has its fruit unto holineſs, and the end is everlaſting life. Though our faith remove mountains—though our knowledge exalt us above mankind—though our polemical or metaphyſical ſkill aſtoniſh and dazzle thoſe around us—we are not therefore neceſſarily in the way to heaven. Something yet remains, without which all elſe is ineffectual; that firſt and greateſt of virtues, whereby we are fitted for the privileges of redemption. We do not hear the Saviour addreſſing thoſe on his right hand, "Well done, good and faithful

" ſervants! Ye have diſputed—ye have argued—ye have
" defined—ye have been triumphant in the field of contro-
" verſy—" but, " Come, ye bleſſed of my Father: I was
" an-hungered, I was naked, I was a ſtranger, and ye gave
" me food, and raiment, and relief. Verily I ſay unto
" you, inaſmuch as ye did it unto one of the leaſt of
" theſe, ye did it unto me!"

In diſcourſing on ſuch a topic, before ſuch an audience, the miniſter of the goſpel finds a peculiar ſatisfaction in the thought, that he is the ambaſſador of Chriſt. Called on to witneſs your liberality, he feels an honeſt pride in being authorized to beſtow on you more than human approbation and applauſe—in being commiſſioned to exclaim, on ſuch an occaſion as the preſent, " The bleſſing of the " LORD be upon you—we bleſs you in the name of the " LORD." We congratulate you, true diſciples of him who embraced the little ones in his parental arms, that ye are thus found walking in the footſteps of your Redeemer. We behold you, in a ſignal inſtance, workers together with him, of whom it is declared, that he is a Father of the fatherleſs. We behold you, and the children whom GOD hath given you.

If, as we moſt aſſuredly believe, your good works, wrought through faith in Chriſt Jeſus, will be the condition of your acceptance in the day of judgment—if, among theſe, a charitable attention to the diſtreſſed and neceſſitous is moſt diſtinguiſhed—if that charity is exhibited in its perfection, where regard is had to the welfare of the ſoul, as well as of the body—if, to promote this deſirable purpoſe, true Chriſtianity and ſound policy point out "Religious Education" as the grand requiſite—if, among the candidates for your bounty, their claim ſtands faireſt, whoſe years, whoſe ſex, whoſe orphanage, whoſe helpleſſneſs, by rendering them liable to more than common perils, plead irreſiſtibly in their behalf——how can we but pronounce you bleſſed? how can we, while we contemplate the preſent, do otherwiſe than anticipate the future? Bleſſed are they who conſider the poor; bleſſed are they who conſult their ſpiritual as well as their temporal intereſts; bleſſed are they, who ſelect ſuch objects of their mercy as ſtand moſt eſſentially in need of it; bleſſed is the wiſdom which prevents the commiſſion of ſin, beyond the juſtice which puniſhes, even beyond the compaſſion which ſpares.

God forbid, that I ſhould enter into invidious compariſons between this and any one of thoſe charitable foundations, which render our country a praiſe upon earth, and in ſome or other of which, relief is provided for every ſpecies of human miſery! But I feel myſelf juſtified in the aſſertion, that, while the inſtitution for which I am pleading is ſecond to none in point of utility, the reflections which ariſe in the minds of its patrons are in a pre-eminent manner reflections of pure and unallayed delight. You are not called upon to ſicken at any ſpectacle of wretchedneſs—it is not your horror that is excited, but your gentleſt pity. From the moment of their admiſſion under your foſtering care, theſe children have no misfortunes to deplore. Your munificence provides for all their neceſſities—your goodneſs makes amends to them for every loſs they have ſuſtained. They have benefactors, friends, fathers, mothers, all, in you. From "the waſte howling wilderneſs," where they were expoſed, without ſhelter or protection, to perils of every poſſible kind, you have removed theſe tender plants into a more propitious ſoil—you have defended them againſt the winds and ſtorms of adverſity—you have placed them where they have nothing to apprehend, either from inconſiderate

conſiderate neglect, or from lawleſs plunder—you have given them ſuch cultivation as (with the bleſſing of Heaven on your endeavours) will one day make them meet for the paradiſe of God.

It may not be amiſs to reflect for a moment on the nature of thoſe dangers to which we allude. We are told, and the relation is but too credible, that in the receſſes of our vaſt metropolis, certain miſcreants lay their ſnares for the deſerted female orphan—that ſhe is inveigled to their abodes by the vileſt means, for the vileſt purpoſes—that ſhe is welcomed, with inſidious careſſes, to manſions, where infamy is reduced to a ſyſtem; where every good principle is carefully eradicated; and whence ſhe is conſigned to all the miſeries of vice, at a time, and in a manner, at which nature ſhudders, and humanity recoils. As yet the conductours of theſe accurſed ſeminaries, in compariſon with whom the ancient worſhippers of Moloch ſeem guiltleſs, have eſcaped the ſword of juſtice—as yet its avenging arm has been unable to ſtrike—but their crime is too plainly diſcovered in its conſequences. Betrayed—abandoned—deſerted by the very depravity which ſeduced them, theſe miſerable victims are thrown,

in

in a ſtate of deſolation, on a pitileſs world *. Grown deſperate by untimely misfortune, regardleſs of exiſtence, hopeleſs even of mercy, they ruſh headlong into the deepeſt abyſs of profligacy. Thus they live; and thus too often they die.—But we purſue the ſubject no further. While our hearts burn with indignation, we turn for relief to the calm retreats of innocence and virtue—we contemplate the ſcene before us with redoubled pleaſure—again we implore the divine favour on your undertakings—again we call you the bleſſed children of your heavenly Father.

Without entering on details, which, however intereſting and delightful, would on the preſent occaſion neither be neceſſary nor expedient, it is ſufficient to remark, that the twofold foundation on which this fair ſuperſtructure

* It may poſſibly be objected that too high a colouring is given to this picture; as a moſt reſpectable and flouriſhing charity directs its attention to the calamities of this particular deſcription of ſufferers. But it is a fact too well known to the patrons of that excellent inſtitution, that the private munificence of individuals can only apply a partial remedy to the evil complained of. We know no adequate means of affording general relief, unleſs a national eſtabliſhment were ſet on foot, upon the plan of the MAGDALEN HOSPITAL, conducted on ſimilar principles, and ſupported by the public purſe. Such an eſtabliſhment would do honour to any age and any nation.

is raiſed, conſiſts in leſſons of induſtry and of piety—the one, to fit theſe children of your adoption for the uſeful offices of life; the other, to prepare them for that glory to which the Chriſtian is aſpiring. Like wiſe and judicious parents, you neither ſuffer indulgence to enervate, nor ſeverity to check the beſt energies of the ſoul. You do not elevate them above their ſtation; but you teach them to fulfil the duties of it well. It is your endeavour, that, on being removed from your immediate protection, they may become truſty and diligent ſervants, and, in proceſs of time, frugal, careful, induſtrious wives—that, when the honeſt plebeian thinks proper to exerciſe the deareſt privilege of his exiſtence, he may take to his home one who will render that home reſpectable and happy; without any apprehenſions of ruin, from aſſociating himſelf for life with affectation, folly, and idleneſs. We cannot ſufficiently lament, that there are many parents among the lower claſſes, who will deprive themſelves of comforts, and almoſt of neceſſaries, for the purpoſe of beſtowing on their daughters what they term "A Genteel "Education!" A multitude of convenient receptacles have ſtarted up, where theſe little pupils of vanity are formed into an awkward imitation of the manners of their

 ſuperiours;

ſuperiours; where they are taught thoſe ſuperficial accompliſhments which miſbecome them, and are left ignorant of every thing moſt uſeful for them to know. It is this abſurd and heterogeneous ſyſtem, which, while it tends indirectly to ſpread the contagion of vice, does at the ſame time diſturb the order of ſociety, and renders what is beautiful and perfect in itſelf, a ſcene of diſcord and confuſion.

Far different is the principle which you adopt, and the conduct which you purſue. You ſcorn to bow the knee to the Baal of faſhion. Simplicity and godly ſincerity attend on your footſteps, while you direct the objects of your care in the paths of virtue. You know, that the cup of human felicity is diſpenſed by the Almighty with a juſt and impartial hand—that the light of his countenance ſhines on us, not in proportion to our riches, or our dignity, but according to the meaſure of our faith and obedience. Impreſſed with theſe ſentiments, you make it an object of ambition to theſe happy children, that they ſhould attain—not the frivolous talents which may lead them aſtray; but thoſe better endowments, which may teach them to adorn the doctrine of GOD their Saviour

in all things: that they may be prepared for every diſpenſation of his providence—that whether they live, they may live unto the Lord, or whether they die, they may die unto the Lord; whether they live or die, being the Lord's.

Meanwhile it is every way reaſonable to conclude, that the beneficial effects of your liberality will not be confined to the individuals who thus paſs their tender years under your tutelage. You have not only conferred on them bleſſings in their own perſons, but you have qualified them to become the inſtructreſſes of others. Senſible of the advantages they have received, they will be ſollicitous to impart them; particularly where they are connected by all the fondeſt attachments of human nature. The generation to come ſhall know your bounties, even the children which are yet unborn. When the enraptured mother is diſcharging the firſt and moſt ſacred of all maternal duties, the remembrance of the paſt will ruſh on her heart, and grateful effuſions burſt from her lips. She will teach the infant tongue to liſp your praiſes. Your goodneſs will be the exhauſtleſs ſubject of her intereſting tale—theſe hallowed and peaceful walls will be in

the eye of her fancy. 'There I was received,' ſhe will ſay, 'when the world was preparing its terrours, and my 'poor parents were ſummoned to their graves. There 'the tear of early ſorrow was wiped away from my eyes. 'There I was exhorted to abhor the evil, and to chooſe 'the good, by thoſe who found a delight in comforting 'and ſupporting the miſerable. I was friendleſs, and 'they protected me; I was ignorant, and they inſtructed 'me. There I learnt, that to fear GOD, and to keep his 'commandments, is the duty, the intereſt, the privilege of 'mortals—that the pleaſures of vice are ſo many ſpecious 'deluſions—that "her ways are ways of wretchedneſs, and "all her paths are woe *."

Nor are theſe the only ſenſations of happineſs which you awaken in the parental boſom. Often, in the moſt diſtreſsful circumſtances, do you cauſe the widow's heart to ſing for joy. Often do you ſpeak peace to the mourner, when on the confines of the tomb. Unable to ſtruggle any longer againſt her accumulated ſorrows, borne down by penury, diſappointment, and ſickneſs, ſhe contemplates her approaching diſſolution. As far as

* See the introduction to Dr. Moore's Zeluco.

ſhe

ſhe is perſonally concerned, it is an event altogether unattended by diſmay—perhaps ſhe is even deſirous to depart, and to be with Chriſt; that ſhe may attain the glories of a better reſurrection, and be re-united, as ſhe humbly truſts, to the ſociety of her lamented huſband. But amidſt theſe aſpirations, one dear and tender tie faſtens her to the world, and retards the departing ſoul in its flight toward heaven. The miſeries of an infant daughter, now about to be deprived of her laſt remaining ſuccour—the calamities and perils which await the deſolate orphan in her progreſs through life, preſent themſelves in all their horrours to the mother's imagination: the arrows of the Almighty are within her, the poiſon whereof drinketh up the ſpirit. On a ſudden, a ray of light is ſeen to penetrate through this darkneſs. A voice, as it were the voice of GOD, ſeems to addreſs her, "Leave thy fatherleſs children; I will preſerve them!" Some meſſenger of comfort brings her the joyful tidings, that your munificence will be extended to the object of her anxious love. Inſtantly the tumults of her breaſt are huſhed into tranquillity. She has now all to hope, and nothing to regret. To your guardianſhip ſhe chearfully entruſts her deareſt treaſure—ſhe commends herſelf

ſelf into the hands of her gracious Redeemer—and the bitterneſs of death is paſt.

Such are your benevolent deſigns, and ſuch the variety of bleſſings which reſult from them. With delight we contemplate the correſponding ſucceſs, wherewith the God whom you ſerve ſo faithfully hath proſpered you. We behold you diſpenſing the waters of life; and, like a never-failing ſtream, enabled by Heaven to diſpenſe them freely. Among the ſupporters of your eſtabliſhment you enumerate ſome of the beſt and greateſt characters that adorn our country—perſons, from whom their rank derives, not on whom it confers, diſtinction. You glory, and with reaſon, in your illuſtrious Patroneſs: on the ſubject of whoſe praiſes, though it is unneceſſary to ſpeak, it is an act of ingratitude to be ſilent—whoſe excellence renders her the delight and admiration of mankind, and makes the homage of a grateful people as much the effect of ſentiment, as of duty. Are the neceſſitous to be relieved? She is there.—Are the fallen to be reclaimed? She is there.—Are the innocent to be preſerved? She is HERE, the delegate of Heaven!

I have

I have treſpaſſed too far on your indulgence, and muſt conclude. Yet in a caſe where to flatter were to betray, I cannot diſmiſs you with the aſſurance, that, by merely liſtening to the dictates of a compaſſionate heart, you will ſecure to yourſelves the glories of immortality. Other duties, other virtues are requiſite—the fruits of true repentance; a ſtedfaſt reliance on the mercies of Jeſus Chriſt; and that holineſs, without which no man muſt ſee the Lord *. But though the moſt conſummate degree of benevolence cannot, ſingly and unaſſiſted, effect your ſalvation; yet if this be not in you, nor abound, nothing can render you the ſons and daughters of the Lord Almighty. Faith is dead, being alone—hope, an airy edifice without foundation—zeal, an unhallowed fire—prayer, a mockery of GOD. Animated therefore, and not diſcouraged by theſe conſiderations, we exhort you, that, as ye have received, ſo ye would give, freely; that your abundance, like the manna which came down from heaven, may be

* The reader will find this idea very ably enlarged on, in a late ingenious publication, entitled, "An Eſtimate of the Religion of the Faſhionable "World,"—a work which report aſcribes, and perhaps not erroneouſly, to the pen of a Lady, whoſe literary endowments render her one of the moſt eminent characters of the preſent age, and whoſe admirable talents have ever been devoted to the cauſe of piety and virtue.

ſhowered upon the orphan and the poor. And if ſucceſsful application has been made in their behalf to the generous feelings of your ſouls; if ye have trembled at their dangers, and rejoiced in their deliverance, you cannot better demonſtrate the intereſt you take in their welfare, than by making ſome *addition*, however inconſiderable, to the bounty which you had this day appropriated to their relief. To the individuals who beſtow them, theſe free-will-offerings of charity will be trifling, and can lead to no perſonal inconvenience—in their aggregate, they may prove of eſſential importance; and they will be at all events a ſacrifice acceptable, well-pleaſing unto GOD. Vouchſafe to make the experiment—and think not that you will regret the donation, either now, or in your future lives, or at the hour of death, or in the day of judgment. He, in whoſe name and for whoſe ſake ye give it, will reſtore it ſeven-fold to you or to your children. After many days you will behold the bread, which ye thus caſt on the waters, wafted back again, not without a bleſſing from above. Ye know who hath ſaid, "Whatſoever "thou ſpendeſt *more*, when I come again, I will repay "thee."

We

We detain you no longer from the exercise of your liberality. Precious in the sight of the Lord is your work, and labour of love. Precious is the incense of those prayers, which with every rising and setting sun will be offered up for you to the throne of mercy, from innocent and grateful hearts. That you have entitled yourselves to them, will be your comfort, though all other comfort should fail. In the evening of your days, when this transitory scene shall draw near its close, when the phantoms of ambition, the dreams of pleasure, shall vanish and be no more, reflections on such acts as that for which you are preparing, will cause light to spring up in obscurity. They will smooth the bed of sickness—they will mitigate the pains of death—they will advance the hope of heaven—and they will teach you to look forward, with humble confidence, to that hour, when He whom you have loved, and under whose banners you have fought, shall return, in his glorious majesty, "to discern between the "righteous and the wicked, between him that serveth "God, and him that serveth him not."

Now to Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, three persons, and one God, be ascribed, as is most due, all honour, power, adoration, and praise, world without end. Amen.

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Now to Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, three persons, and one God, be ascribed, as is most due, all honour, power, adoration, and praise, both now and ever. Amen.